



Monuments Fund Foundation celebrates 30th anniversary



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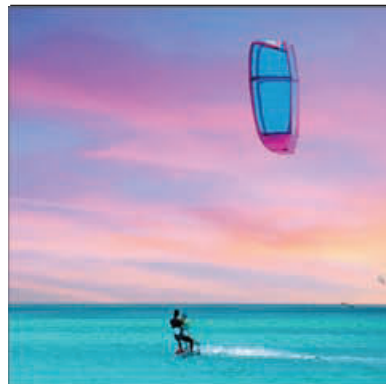
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Ending the "stigma" of obesity: A national shift toward compassion and science



A medicine distributor displays packs of Ozempic and Wegovy self-injecting (semaglutide) GLP-1 prefilled pens at his office in Thane on March 20, 2026.

For decades, the cultural narrative surrounding weight in the United States was built on a foundation of shame. Obesity was framed almost exclusively as a moral failing or a lack of willpower, leaving millions of Americans to navigate a healthcare system that offered little more than the repetitive, often ineffective advice to "eat less and move more." However, this April marks a historic turning point in the American medical landscape. A profound shift is occurring,

as federal health agencies and major medical associations officially move to reclassify obesity not as a lifestyle choice, but as a complex, chronic biological disease.

This change is doing more than just updating medical textbooks; it is systematically dismantling the "stigma" that has prevented millions from seeking and receiving life-saving care. For the readers of this vacation newspaper—many of whom are

taking time away to focus on their well-being and mental clarity—this news represents a breath of fresh air and a new era of medical empathy.

The catalyst for change

The primary driver of this shift has been the undeniable success of a new generation of metabolic medications, specifically GLP-1 receptor agonists. These treatments have provided biological proof that weight regulation is controlled by complex hormonal signals in the brain and gut, rather than just "grit." As these medications have become more accessible, the medical community has witnessed a dramatic reduction in associated chronic conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

More recently, groundbreaking research presented this month has linked these metabolic treatments to cancer prevention. By treating the underlying chronic inflammation associated with

obesity, doctors are seeing a lower incidence of thirteen different types of cancer. This discovery has prompted insurance providers to reconsider their coverage models, moving away from "weight loss" as a cosmetic goal and toward "metabolic health" as a preventative necessity.

Beyond the scale

The most significant impact of this news, however, is the psychological relief it provides. For the first time, the "blame game" is being retired. In clinics from New York to California, healthcare providers are being retrained to use "people-first" language, focusing on the patient's overall health markers—such as blood pressure, mobility, and mental health—rather than just the number on the scale. "Stigma is a barrier to health," says Dr. Aris Thorne, a leading metabolic specialist. "When a patient feels judged, they avoid the doctor. When we treat obesity with the same clinical rigor

and compassion as we do asthma or hypertension, we see patients thrive. We are finally aligning our empathy with our science."

A new view on vacation wellness

For those currently on holiday, this shift in perspective is particularly relevant. The "vacation guilt" often associated with indulging in local cuisines or taking a break from rigorous exercise is being replaced by a more balanced approach to health. The focus is shifting toward "nutritional joy" and "functional movement"—encouraging travelers to enjoy their surroundings and food without the heavy burden of self-judgment.

Resorts and wellness retreats are already pivoting to match this new medical reality. Instead of "boot camps" focused on rapid weight loss, many are offering programs centered on stress reduction, hormonal balance, and the restorative power of nature. □

U.S. expects to finish wall along Mexican border by late 2027

Washington, United States

The United States expects to complete President Donald Trump's long-promised southern border wall by late 2027, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Rodney Scott said Tuesday. The barrier along the US-Mexico border is made of reinforced metal beams and is intended to run from San Diego to the Gulf of Mexico, except in selected areas "where we've made a conscious decision that we don't need it," Scott said at the Center for Immigration Studies event in Washington.

"The primary border wall will be done by the end of 2027," he said.

"There's a couple of gaps," Scott said. "The only places we're not building a border wall is places where we've made a conscious decision that we don't need it. Big Bend National Park, for example -- super remote area, some very, very high cliffs."

The wall will be supplemented by electronic surveillance and other devices, which would be installed by "about July, maybe at the latest August 2028," Scott said.



Children play climbing the Mexico-U.S. border wall during Mother's Day celebrations in Playas de Tijuana, Baja California state, Mexico on May 10, 2026.

The long stretch of the Rio Grande along the border

of Texas, which runs more than 1,200 miles (1,900 km) between the two countries,

will have its own physical barriers.

"We'll have the entire system to include a secondary barrier in places we need it -- the water barrier and the Rio Grande River -- and the technology," Scott said. The wall is intended to curb illegal immigration and narcotics trafficking from Mexico, which have declined, according to official indicators.

But the physical barrier won't be enough to curb clandestine activities, Scott said. Tunnels, drones and other workarounds are already being used to spot patrols and move drugs. □

As bee population collapses, US apiarists fear research cuts

Baker, United States

In a lot behind a disused West Virginia gas station at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains, Roy Funkhouser is surrounded by about a dozen beekeepers and countless buzzing bees.

This club of apiarists -- ranging from hobbyists to full-time commercial bee farmers -- gathers regularly to learn new skills and discuss tricky problems, not least the parasitic varroa mites that plague their hives.

But the group -- and beekeepers across the country -- face a new challenge: The government's closure of a key research facility, home to the nation's oldest bee lab that has been at the vanguard of research into bee ills for over a century.

Funkhouser, a veteran commercial beekeeper, should have around 1,200 hives under his care. This year, he's sitting on less than 200.

"It's a real struggle," Funkhouser told AFP. "The parasites that we've got now, the mites and everything -- more viruses and more pesticide exposures, more chemical exposures -- everything is just more of a struggle today than what it was in the past."

- Catastrophic losses -

He's hardly alone.

America's beekeepers are in a bad way.

They lost more than half their bee colonies in the year leading up to April 2025, according to the latest estimates from Apiary Inspectors of America, marking the highest annual loss since the group began surveying beekeepers.

- Mites & Viruses -

"You know, I can sample for a mite count, but I can't sample for mitochondrial DNA," Funkhouser said. "We need the lab for that."

Funkhouser is referring to the aptly named "Varroa Destructor," a 1.5mm crab-looking creature that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) calls "the most serious pest of honey bees inflicting more damage



Bee researcher Zac Lamas (L) gestures while speaking to a local beekeeping club in Baker, West Virginia, on May 9, 2026.

and higher economic costs than all other apicultural diseases."

The mites now wreak havoc on American bee colonies by feeding on the insects and spreading a wing-deforming virus.

The mites are also a threat to American crops.

Farmers pay Funkhouser to truck his bees across the country -- as far as the almond fields of California -- where they spend around two weeks pollinating crops.

"They'll get a percentage of almonds without [my bees] but not nearly the quantity that they're looking for," Funkhouser explained.

- Farm science -

In his mite battle, Funkhouser has found an ally in Zac Lamas, a researcher at the bee lab within the USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC).

Lamas's "whole team come down one time, and we sampled everything," Funkhouser said. "They took bees back and grew them in the lab, they cultured all the pollen, the wax, and many, many things."

Lamas and his colleagues then formulate advice to share with beekeepers around the nation.

"It's not that we're working with one beekeeper. We might be working with several million dollars' worth of colonies, or several million dollars' worth of pollination services that won't exist be-

cause these colonies are at risk," Lamas told AFP between bare-armed lectures atop the hives.

But researchers like him may soon be out of job, as the USDA looks to save money by shutting BARC,

eliminating labs and redistributing others to facilities across the country.

- Congressional cuts -

A USDA spokesperson told AFP that Congress had reduced agriculture research funding by more than \$32 million "in certain areas," forcing the closure of the storied research center, leaving the fate of the nation's oldest bee lab uncertain.

Lamas argues this is short-sighted.

"The lab is 3.2 million (dollars) a year for 20 plus scientists, and all the work we do," he said. "We responded to a \$600 million problem... The idea that we're redundant and expensive isn't a good way to generalize the value of this lab or the cost of this lab." □

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Raisin moonshine banned in Iran enjoys resurgence in New York

New York, United States

Three Iranian men pressed rehydrated raisins at an artisan distillery just outside New York, thousands of miles from their war-struck homeland. They were carefully producing aragh sagi, a traditional spirit banned by the clerical authorities along with all alcohol following the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Despite its outlaw moonshine status, the drink is still made clandestinely and consumed inside Iran.

"Everybody's drinking, but we just don't want to get caught," said Siavash Karampour, formerly a fixture on Tehran's rock music scene and now the co-manager of a bar in Brooklyn. Together with three childhood friends who, like him, came to New York to rebuild their lives, they decided to brew the Iranian firewater in the United States.

They say they wanted to offer others like them a taste of home as well as "something that has been behind the curtain."

Branded as "SAG," their aragh sagi -- like a stronger Italian grappa -- is made in the still of David Nahmias, a distiller born into a Moroccan Jewish family who makes mahia, a traditional



A bartender prepares a cocktail using the traditional Iranian spirit "Aragh Sagi" produced in Yonkers, at a restaurant in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, on April 28, 2026.

dried fig-based spirit from his homeland.

"They came to me through word of mouth. Their alcohol uses the same process as arak, which you find in Syria or Lebanon -- but without the anise. It wasn't complicated for me... And I liked them!" Nahmias said.

The creators of SAG, aged between 35 and 41, settled in New York several years ago and remain active in the local Iranian diaspora and all have day jobs.

They were the first to bring

aragh sagi to the U.S. market, although a handful of brands exist in Europe.

'I feel privileged' -

The company's output of 7,000 bottles a year -- sold for \$50 a pop in around 30 liquor stores and available in as many bars -- remains modest.

But bars have latched on to their creation as a way to promote new cocktails.

"We just started this back in the day, as a hobby... we kind of want to grow organically," said brew group

member Sasan Oskoue, a visual artist.

The entrepreneurs see their venture as a project that goes beyond a simple spirit, representing an emotional and cultural gesture.

"So many Iranian artists and filmmakers have highlighted some parts of Iran that haven't been seen before, and in making this, we are kind of doing the same thing," said Karampour.

Since they launched SAG two years ago, many artistic projects have emerged to complement the brand,

with parties in New York and DJ sets performed by Iranian musicians.

Their connection to Iran through friends and family is constant, making the ongoing conflict between Tehran and their host nation all the more painful.

"It's really tough to be seeing all these images, and then you still have to go to work and live your daily life... You technically live in two countries," said Karampour.

With the help of large handheld food mixers, they carefully grind the mixture of dried Californian grapes and water, which they then ferment before distilling it in a large still imported from Germany.

Amir Imani, a computer engineer, says New York was the ideal place to establish their brand, a city that is both very diverse and tolerant, and where their business is not written off as "exotic."

"Being in New York helps, because I can see people are not supportive of what is happening in this administration -- either the war or like Immigration and Customs Enforcement and all of that," Imani said.

"So I feel privileged that I'm here surrounded by people who think the same." □



In the quiet community halls of the Cherokee Nation and the vibrant cultural centers of the Pacific Northwest, a rhythmic sound is echoing—the clatter of plum pits and the soft thud of willow sticks against woven baskets. This isn't just the sound of a game; it is the sound of a cultural reclamation. Across the United States,

Native American communities are reviving the ancient art of traditional dice making, turning a prehistoric pastime into a modern tool for education, healing, and tribal pride.

For centuries, hundreds of Indigenous nations—from the Lakota of the Great Plains to the Hopi of the

Ancient Native American dice games spark a modern cultural renaissance

Southwest—played sophisticated games of chance and skill. Long before the arrival of the six-sided plastic cube, Indigenous "dice" were masterpieces of natural engineering. Artisans crafted them from locally sourced materials: bison ribs, walnut shells, peach stones, and carved deer bone. Typically two-sided, these pieces were etched with intricate symbols representing clans, constellations, or the four directions, then smoothed to a high polish with animal fat and patience.

More than a game

The revival of these games, such as the "Basket Game"

or "Hand Game," is being hailed by tribal leaders as "good medicine." In many communities, the process of making the dice is just as important as the play itself. Elders are leading workshops to teach youth how to harvest willow during the correct moon phase and how to use traditional dyes made from berries and minerals to color the wood.

"When a young person sits down to carve a set of plum pit dice, they aren't just making a toy," says Michael Running Bear, a cultural educator.

"They are connecting with the materials of their ancestors. They are learning the

patience of the craft and the stories that go along with each symbol. It builds a bridge between generations that was nearly broken."

The mathematics of tradition

Beyond cultural preservation, these traditional games are making a surprise appearance in modern classrooms. Educators are using Native American dice to teach complex concepts of probability and statistics. Because most traditional dice are two-sided (with a "decorated" and "plain" side), they provide a perfect real-world model for binary probability. □

From poplars to pistachios, Afghans rediscover the value of trees

Char Bagh, Afghanistan

Under the shade of recently planted poplars in northeastern Afghanistan, village leader Ghulam Ali Poya is proud to see residents rediscover the value of trees after years of war-time deforestation.

"There were forests of pistachio trees," he told AFP, gesturing to the bare mountains that surround Char Bagh's mud homes.

"During the conflicts and the civil war, they were destroyed; no one could stop the logging."

From the 1979 Soviet invasion until the fall of the first Taliban government in the early 2000s, "around 50 percent of Afghanistan's forest cover was lost", said Mohammad Nasir Shalizi, a researcher at North Carolina State University.

In eastern Afghanistan, timber smuggling to Pakistan drove massive logging, while in the more arid central and northern "pistachio belt", residents used wood for heating and cooking. But in the last two decades, deforestation has slowed "substantially", Shalizi said. Forest cover has increased 35 percent nationwide since 2011, according to the National Statistics and Information Authority, though just 2.5 percent of Afghanistan was forested



This photograph taken on May 18, 2026 shows Afghan farmer Bas Begum Ahmadi (R) with her husband Abdul Samad Ahmadi standing next to paulownia trees at her family-owned plot, which supports a micro-forest in the Char Bagh area of Doshi district, Baghlan province.

in 2025 and cover is still shrinking in some areas.

But experts say communities are working to improve forest cover. Both the US-backed government, in place until 2021, and the current Taliban administration have supported tree-planting campaigns.

In Char Bagh, the Aga Khan Development Network funded a kilometre-square grove which includes poplars, paulownias, pomegranates and persimmons.

- 'A model' -

The land belongs to farmer Bas Begum Ahmadi, who hopes to sell fruit and homemade jam, but it is also open to the community of 350 families.

"Having these trees makes me feel good; my environment is green, and we breathe fresh air," said the 45-year-old, who tends the trees with her husband to support their four children. This "micro-forest" follows Japanese botanist Akiira Miyawaki's principles: dense planting of mostly local species of varying

heights.

It is noticeably cooler than the surrounding bare fields and offers twigs for stove fuel and leaves that feed livestock.

Micro-forests "restore ecosystems, improve soil fertility, help climate resilience, and support community livelihood," said Parisa Malikzada, Afghanistan agriculture coordinator for the organisation, which has planted 500 micro-forests in seven provinces.

Poya said the forest, next to a river, prevents soil erosion

during flooding and offers "a model for people".

"Everyone comes to have a look, and they'd like to have one too," he told AFP. In Afghanistan, where many places are hard to reach and the state has limited funds, community-based forest management is the most effective approach to reforestation, experts told AFP.

- Penalties for tree cutting -

Afghan authorities have set a goal of planting 200 million trees between 2023 and 2030, relying partly on NGOs, the United Nations and the private sector.

"Last year, the target was eight million, but in the end, 17 million were planted," said Rohullah Amin, head of climate change at the General Environmental Protection Agency, where he has worked for more than a decade.

This year's goal is nine million.

Challenges include selecting native, climate-adapted species, water scarcity, and livestock damaging saplings.

Some forests have struggled with "lack of care or water", Amin acknowledged, including one site where drought killed 70 percent of the planted pines. □

Protesters block road to Mexican World Cup stadium

Mexico City, Mexico

Thousands of demonstrators blocked an avenue leading to Mexico City's Azteca Stadium on Tuesday, just days before the 2026 World Cup kicks off at the venue.

As football fans flood into tournament co-hosts the United States, Canada and Mexico, the Central American country is grappling with chaotic teacher protests in its capital.

Tuesday's protest, led by a breakaway group of the CNTE teachers union, follows a week of demonstrations that President Claudia Sheinbaum has called a "provocation."

"As if to say, 'Look at how

bad the situation is in Mexico,'" she told a press conference.

The Azteca stadium will host the World Cup's first game pitting Mexico against South Africa on Thursday, with a vast global TV audience set to tune in for the opening ceremony and the match.

Authorities have deployed thousands of officers and set up concrete barriers surrounding the venue to block protests.

"We intend to reach the stadium," demonstrator Angel Villalobos told AFP on Tuesday. "The government has given some responses, but they don't help, they don't satisfy."

Sheinbaum said earlier that the opening match was "guaranteed," though the left-leaning leader again ruled out using police to repress the demonstrations.

Her government has favored dialogue with the protesting teachers, but to no avail.

"We're going to continue our struggle," said Austreberto Flores, another protester looking to block Azteca Stadium.

The CNTE teachers union has been on strike since last week to demand a salary raise and the reversal of a pension law which the government considers unfeasible.

The teachers have also set up camp near the World Cup fan zone in Mexico City's Zocalo square.

On June 1, police dispersed protesters in the area with

rubber bullets and teargas.

"They want to make it seem like there is mass social turmoil in Mexico, and that's not true," Sheinbaum has said of the protests. □



Teachers and students from Ayotzinapa school march to the Ciudad de Mexico Stadium in Mexico City on June 9, 2026.

Between Homer and Hollywood: Troy a source of Turkish pride

Çanakkale, Turkey

A gift from the film set of "Troy", a giant Trojan Horse replica looms over the port of Çanakkale on the Dardanelles Strait in western Turkey.

First related by Homer, then retold for the silver screen in 2004, with Brad Pitt as Achilles, the legend of the ancient city travels to Rome's Colosseum this week, where a major new exhibition opens on Friday. Keen to showcase the city's Anatolian roots, Turkey has loaned out more than 220 artefacts that will be on show at the exhibition, "Troy and Rome", which runs until mid-October.



Troy Museum director Sinem Duzgoren poses in front of statues found at excavation sites at the Troy Museum in Çanakkale on June 2, 2026.

"When you read Homer, you don't get a very clear idea of the Trojans' identity. But at the time of the Trojan War, they were certainly among the Anatolian peoples," said Reyhan Korpe, deputy head of the Troy excavations and an ancient history expert at Çanakkale University.

Located on Turkey's Aegean coastline, the remains of Troy are a UNESCO-listed World Heritage site comprising 185 hectares (457 acres) of stones and crumbling ramparts dotted with poppies and scampering squirrels.

For 30 years, Korpe has walked every inch of this huge site, whose layers tell the story of nine different settlements, the remains of their ramparts intertwined and layered on top of one another.

- Western flank of the east -

"I spent a whole year just walking through the stones, maps in hand, trying to understand how they fit together," he told AFP. His passion is evident for the site, which was founded in 3,000 BC and was con-

stantly inhabited until being abandoned in the sixth century AD.

"It was the most western part of eastern civilisation," which is what gave Troy its significance, Korpe said. The Trojan War, which took place around 1,200 BC and lasted 10 years, until the siege and the city's defeat parts of which are recounted in the Iliad "was the first confrontation between the East and the West", he said of the Anatolian world and its Greek equivalent, referring to it as "the first world

war".

It is an idea with strong resonance in these wooded hills, which several millennia later witnessed the World War I battles of 1915, when Allied troops suffered a bloody defeat trying to seize the Dardanelles from the Ottoman Empire.

- Luwian hieroglyphics -

Of the hundreds of artefacts Turkey has loaned to the Rome exhibition, more than 100 come from the Troy museum, some of which will be on display for

the first time.

One piece is a bronze seal marked with hieroglyphics that was discovered in 1995, which offers important clues about the city's Anatolian roots.

"It's the only trace of writing found at Troy that was written in an Anatolian language, which proves that the first language spoken there was that of the Luwian peoples," explained museum director Sinem Duzgoren.

The Luwians were an ancient people who lived in western and southern Anatolia during the Bronze and early Iron Ages, whose language played a major role in the Hittite empire.

- From Wilusa to Ilios -

Although Troy was not a Hittite city, it was part of the Hittite empire, which referred to it as Wilusa. That became Ilios for the Greeks or Ilios for Homer.

"These pieces may not be the most spectacular, but they are the most important from a historical point of view, because they bear witness to the history of Troy," Duzgoren told AFP. Also sent to Rome are a large number of weapons for use in war stones for use in a sling, knives, spears and arrowheads.□

Japan city relieved as bear caught after roaming streets for days

Utsunomiya, Japan

A bear that roamed the streets of a Japanese city for four days, forcing mass school closures, was caught on Tuesday, capping a search involving

dozens of hunters and police. Terrified families in the city of Utsunomiya, north of Tokyo, peered through windows as a search mission that included helicopters

tried to track down the animal following multiple sightings, including in a shopping arcade, at a university and at a wholesale market.

On Tuesday dozens of police officers, hunters and city officials surrounded a private home where the bear was spotted, an AFP photographer witnessed. After a successful tranquiliser shot, they captured the animal.

AFP images showed the sedated bear loaded onto a truck.

Issei Okabe, a 37-year-old house painter who lives in an apartment next to the house where the bear was caught, told AFP he was "so relieved".

"My kid goes to the pri-

mary school nearby... and news reports said a bear appeared around there," he said.

"Then I watched the news, and our house was shown (in the footage)... I was so surprised.

"This is the first time I heard of a wild bear in Utsunomiya."

The bear sightings had forced the closure of all 94 public primary and middle schools in the city on Monday and Tuesday.

Public broadcaster NHK and other major media reported the bear's capture as breaking news.

The Shimotsuke Shimbun daily, based in Utsunomiya, said the first and second tranquiliser shots missed

the target but a third successfully hit the animal.

A city official told AFP Monday it was not clear whether there was one bear or more roaming the city.

Separately, an "extremely intelligent" bear that injured four people in Fukushima in northern Japan has remained at large after apparently unlatching a window while evading capture, NHK reported.

A record 13 people were killed by bears in Japan last year, and there has been a jump in sightings as the animals emerge hungry from hibernation.

Bears are thriving thanks in part to an abundance of food including acorns, deer and boars under the influence of a warming climate, experts say.□



This handout photo taken and released by Utsunomiya City Hall to Jiji Press on June 9, 2026 shows a bear captured in Utsunomiya City, Tochigi Prefecture.



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Monuments Fund Foundation celebrates 30th anniversary



(Oranjestad)—Monuments Fund Foundation, or Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA), commemorated its 30th anniversary during a special ceremony at the Community Church, where the main focus was on heritage preservation and the future restoration of one of Aruba's most recognizable monuments.

During the evening, representatives of the Government of Aruba, SMFA, the Protestant Community, and the Community Church Foundation gathered to officially mark the next phase in the preliminary process related to the future development and preservation of the Community Church.

According to legal clarifications provided afterward, the documentation signed during the ceremony forms part of a preliminary administrative process and does not yet represent a finalized formal transfer. The legal process and official registration of the documents will continue during the next administrative phase.

An important part of the program was a presentation by outgoing director Anne Witsenburg, who shared the restoration vision for the Community Church and emphasized the urgent need to take action to prevent further deterioration of the historic building.

According to Witsenburg, the restoration project will be developed in four phases.



The first phase focuses on urgent work such as roof repairs and addressing structural issues. Other phases include improvements to facilities, restoration of the outdoor areas, and ultimately the complete restoration of the Community Church.

The ceremony also served as a moment of recognition for the work SMFA has carried out over the past 30 years in preserving monuments and historic buildings throughout Aruba.

Savaneta center of Open Monuments Day
Savaneta became the center of history, culture, and heritage celebrations during the official opening of Open Monuments Day 2026 on Sunday.

The opening took place at FUNARI and began with a symbolic ceremony in which a key representing SMFA was passed from hand to hand among the youth, community stalwarts, Prime Minister Mike Eman, and representatives of the organizations involved. The act symbolized the shared responsibility of opening the doors to our history and continuing to preserve our heritage for future generations.

SMFA's new director Petra Davids opened the morning program, highlighting that the foundation owns 19 protected monuments and is responsible for their care, management, and maintenance. In addition, the foundation organizes various activities throughout the year with the goal of promoting awareness and education about Aruba's monuments. Davids emphasized that Open Monuments Day is one of the most important activities in this effort.

The director noted that this year's edition focuses on Savaneta, a place of exceptional historical value to Aruba. Savaneta was the island's first administrative center and still preserves historic monuments, cultural landscapes, and traditions that form an important part of Aruba's national

Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago.

A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it.

After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina", and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis.

In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aruban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument.

In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was



one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i orgel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres, such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.



Beaches for the whole family to enjoy!

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when traveling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of Pos Chiquito. Though there are several stairs on the sides



of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the en-

trance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore

is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach

Yet another highly popular beach sites, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore. □



Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!

(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These "coconut stands" can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Packed with natural electrolytes, coconuts are a fantastic choice for hydrating yourself under the blazing Aruban sun.

Coconuts also contain antioxidants that can help reduce stress and protect your cells. So while you're having fun exploring the island, know you are well-protected with a fresh-cut coconut in your hand. □

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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique
Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar

National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern

part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is an adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4x4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTV's are not al-



lowed in the park due to its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

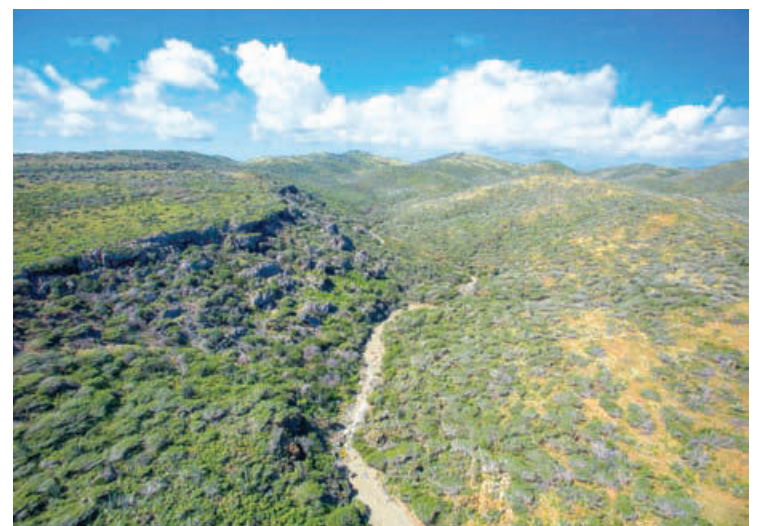
These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased

by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'i Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: <https://acf.aw/>.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information. □





Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCLVI-356

“Spirito di Cabrito”: Aruba’s Dragonfly

In this new episode, Etnia Nativa shares fascinating myths and traditional beliefs about dragonflies from different parts of the world, highlighting their special significance in Aruba, where they are regarded as messengers of legend, transformation, and life.

The graceful flight of dragonflies has long captivated people, not merely as insects, but as bearers of spirit and myth. Known in Papiamentu as “Spirito di Cabrito,” these shimmering creatures are more than a feast for the eyes; they are living links to stories, spirituality, and survival.

Belonging to the ancient Odonata family, dragonflies and damselflies have patrolled Earth for more than 200 million years, predating the dinosaurs and surviving long after their extinction. Though delicate in appearance, these remarkable insects are formidable hunters, consuming hundreds of mosquitoes each day while dazzling observers with their agile, iridescent wings.

Across cultures, dragonflies carry profound symbolism. The Maya regarded them as emissaries of the sun, while in Tahiti they are associated with fortune and divine spirits. In Japan, they symbolize courage and victory; in Hindu mythology, the soul itself transforms into a dragonfly after death. Here in Aruba, shamans invoked the “Spirito di Cabrito” in rituals, viewing it as a symbol of healing, transformation, and good fortune. Yet every flutter also tells a story of survival. Their colors and postures help them evade predators, while their territorial instincts ensure the continuation of the strongest bloodlines. Dragonflies do more than grace the skies; they help maintain ecological balance in wetlands and fields, serving as indicators of clean water and prosperous harvests.

Legends throughout Europe imbue them with mystery and mischief. From the Cantabrian “Caballitos del Diablo” to tales of fairies transformed into drag-



onflies, each story reflects humanity’s enduring fascination with these tireless creatures.

In Aruba, dragonflies are often called “Spirito di Cabrito,” or “spirit of the goat.” This name may have originated from the frequent sight of dragonflies hovering around young goats, leading islanders to associate them with benevolent spirits and good omens. The next time you see a “Spirito di Cabrito” gliding above a pond or garden, take a moment to watch. In its flight lives history, mythology, and the quiet magic of nature, a reminder

that even the smallest creatures can carry the greatest stories.

This cultural column, Island Insight, is presented by Etnia Nativa—a gateway to the living soul of Aruba’s ancestral heritage. Constructed entirely from recycled materials and discreetly tucked away just minutes from the high rise hotels’ area, this unique cultural sanctuary offers an authentic encounter with Aruba’s history, traditions, and identity. Far removed from the bustle of conventional tourism, Etnia Nativa invites visitors to step into a world where stories, artifacts, and living traditions reveal the island’s deeper cultural roots. In little more than an hour, guests often gain a richer understanding of Aruba than many do after days of sightseeing.

For travelers who value authenticity over spectacle, meaningful experiences over photo opportunities, and cultural connection over crowded attractions, Etnia Nativa offers something increasingly rare: a genuine encounter with the spirit of Aruba. Leave not only with memories and photographs, but with a deeper appreciation of the island, its people, and its enduring heritage. Don’t just visit Aruba—experience its spirit, uncover its stories, and connect with its ancestral roots. □



Reserve your mystical cultural experience by appointment only.

WhatsApp +297 592 2702
etniana03@gmail.com

Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'



The 'Lisinbein' (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles south-east from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas – more than anywhere else on the island.



Flow of history

If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

The Community Museum holds a remarkable collection that spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barber-shop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. □



CROSSWORD

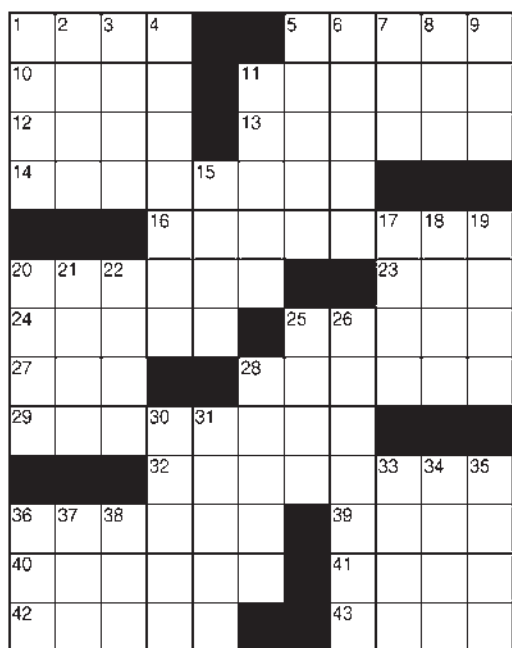
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Guinness of film
5 Get naked
10 Costa —
11 Option
12 Love, Latin-style
13 Forest worker
14 Genuine
16 Something for nothing
20 Benders
23 Knight's title
24 Seaport setting
25 Hue
27 IRS employee
28 Dead ducks
29 Site of some diners
32 Christmas season
36 Wan
39 Concept
40 German subs
41 Castle circler
42 Chili need
43 Building wings

DOWN

- 1 Swift horse
2 Long ride
3 Bus. sch.
4 Wine bottles
5 Hue
6 Copier need
7 Equip
8 Water cooler
9 Pricing word
11 Calls out
15 Stew
17 Cruise stop
18 Designer Christian
19 Goes astray
20 Wound reminder
21 Possum of the comics
22 Pro —
25 Write an app
26 Former
28 Adorns, in a way
30 Singer Bob
31 Legal actions
33 Pop star
34 Start a hand
35 Puts away
36 Place for a pint
37 Penny prez
38 Mauna —



2-9

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-9 CRYPTOQUOTE

CU NKQ XK EKH MKWZ RZ C
DSIMM EKH GZ MKWZX! CU C
XK EKH MKWZ NKQ C
DSIMM EKH MKWZ. — DIRQZM
GZFBZHH

Cryptoquote: LOVE DOESN'T MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND. LOVE IS WHAT MAKES THE RIDE WORTHWHILE. — FRANKLIN P. JONES

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are



open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as



the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02

TUE

GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: B

CARNIVAL MAGIC

Arrival: 9:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: C

09

TUE

CARNIVAL HORIZON

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: B

GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS

Arrival: 13:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: I

16

TUE

ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: B

GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

SEVEN SEAS MARINER

Arrival: 10:00 | Departure: 21:00 | Berth: I

17

WED

CARNIVAL VISTA

Arrival: 7:00 | Departure: 16:00 | Berth: C

ALLURE OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: I

23

THU

CARNIVAL HORIZON

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: B

GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

30

TUE

GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS

Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: B

CARNIVAL MAGIC

Arrival: 9:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: C

A large cruise ship, likely a Carnival ship, is shown sailing on the ocean. The ship is white with blue and yellow accents, and it has multiple decks with balconies. The ship is moving towards the right side of the frame. The ocean is a deep blue color, and the sky is a lighter blue with some white clouds. In the background, there are some white dots arranged in a grid pattern.

ARUBA
TODAY

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	8	5	6			3		
	4				7		6	
			1				2	5
			2	4	3			
7	1				5			
9			7				5	4
8	2		4		6			1
4				7		8	3	2
				3		4		6

Difficulty: ★★★

6/10

Answer to previous puzzle

2	9	8	3	5	7	4	1	6
1	3	7	6	4	8	2	9	5
4	5	6	1	2	9	8	7	3
7	8	4	2	1	3	5	6	9
3	6	1	4	9	5	7	2	8
9	2	5	8	7	6	3	4	1
8	4	3	7	6	1	9	5	2
5	1	2	9	3	4	6	8	7
6	7	9	5	8	2	1	3	4

Difficulty: ★★

6/9

Woolly mammoth among trove of ancient DNA found in squirrel poo

Paris, France

A huge treasure trove of ancient DNA from animals including extinct woolly mammoths has been discovered in frozen squirrel faeces in Canada's remote Yukon territory, scientists said Tuesday.

The DNA found deep inside sealed-off burrows is between 3,000 and 700,000 years old, offering a rare window into how life has changed over the millennia.

As well as DNA from woolly mammoths which the US company Colossal claims it is trying to "de-extinct" genetic material was also found from wolves, bison, horses, a cheetah and hundreds of plants.

Tyler Murchie, a paleogenomics researcher at Canada's McMaster University and lead author of a new study, admitted that digging through squirrel poop might sound "less appealing" than discovering, say, a mammoth tusk. However the "spectacular" amount of information they uncovered suggests that faeces is an overlooked way to see into our planet's distant past, he added.

The scientists had just been expecting to study the squirrel's microbiome before coming across the "really surprising biodiversity of organisms", Murchie said. It turned out that arctic ground squirrels were ideal subjects for this research because of their "natural archivist behaviour", he explained.

The squirrels are only conscious for around four months a year, spending the rest of their life in hibernation. So when they are awake, "they've got to get out there and eat as much as they can of everything," Murchie said.

The squirrels pack their burrows with nuts, seeds, leaves, bones, fur and anything else they can find. But over time, rising permafrost permanently sealed off some of the burrows in



The remains of a 3.5 meters tall, 12,000-year-old woolly mammoth is seen on display in Hong Kong on August 15, 2024, the first-ever public display of a mammoth skeleton of this scale in the city.

the Yukon, creating a perfectly preserved time capsule.

Murchie said they even found a "super cute little guy" frozen in time. "He just went to sleep one season, then he never woke up... it wasn't until some palaeontologist came by investigating that they found him in there."

- Back from the dead? -

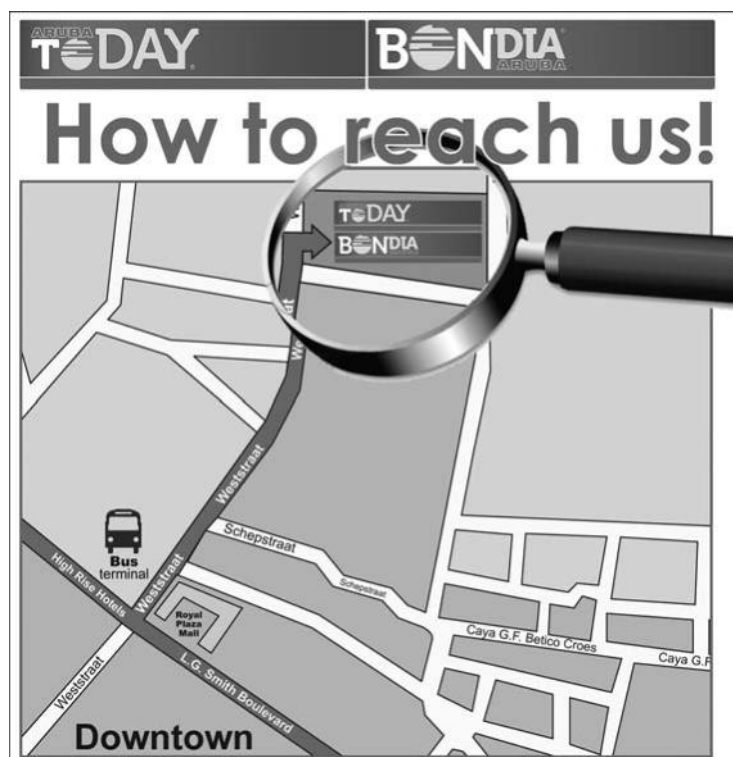
The scientists used the DNA to reconstruct 18 mitochondrial genomes, including for six woolly mammoths that lived in different eras.

This involves using computers to stitch together DNA fragments, like puzzle pieces, Murchie explained. Colossal has declared its intention to resurrect the woolly mammoth, which went extinct around 4,000 years ago.

However experts have expressed scepticism about the claim, saying the resulting animal would be more like an Asian elephant with some genetic tweaks to make it resemble a mammoth.

Murchie, who does not

work for Colossal, said the genetic data they found would be made publicly available, so the company could use it. □



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HEALTH



DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad
Hospital
7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas
IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police 100
Police Oranjestad 527 3140
Police Noord 527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

EU orders Meta to open WhatsApp to rival AI chatbots for free

Brussels, Belgium

The EU ordered Meta on Tuesday to give rival AI chatbots access to its WhatsApp platform for free within five working days as it carries out an antitrust probe, or risk a heavy fine. Meta said it would appeal the order, which follows the launch in December of an EU investigation into the US firm's policy of blocking access for AI providers other than Meta AI.

The European Commission, the EU's digital watchdog, said Meta will have to maintain access to competitors until Brussels wraps up its probe.

"Today, we require Meta to restore access to WhatsApp for competing AI assistants while we investigate whether the restrictions may infringe EU competition rules," EU antitrust chief Teresa Ribera said in a statement.

"This will prevent serious and irreparable harm to competition in this growing market by Meta's conduct, which at first sight infringes EU competition rules," the commission said.



This illustration photograph taken on December 1, 2025, shows the logo of U.S. instant messaging software WhatsApp displayed on a smartphone's screen, in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany.

A Meta spokesperson said the measure would allow "OpenAI and some of the largest companies in the world" access for free, adding: "This is regulatory overreach subsidised by the many European companies that pay".

The EU had warned Meta it faced interim measures if

it did not open WhatsApp to rival AI assistants in February. The company then introduced an access fee -- a remedy the EU rejected in April as unsatisfactory.

Traditional antitrust probes can take years and European officials believe the decisions, often fines, come too late to see any positive change to address

the harm already done.

The last time the EU used such interim measures was in 2019, Ribera said.

The EU's goal is that Meta reinstates third-party AI assistants' access to WhatsApp under the same conditions as before its October 2025 policy change when it "effectively" barred them.

The commission said it has

the power to impose a fine of up to 10 percent of the company's total turnover in the business year preceding the infringement if Meta "either intentionally or negligently" contravenes the decision on interim measures.

- Protecting a 'growing market' -

Brussels said the fee offered earlier this year "at first sight" was "in practice equivalent to the previous access ban".

The commission described an "urgent need" to protect a "growing market for general-purpose AI assistants" and give space for smaller players and new entrants to challenge large incumbents.

"We cannot let large digital incumbents leverage their dominance of the past to dictate who in Europe gets to compete and who gets to innovate in AI," Ribera told a press conference in Brussels.

She said the EU order would ensure EU citizens choose which AI chatbots they would prefer to use on WhatsApp. □

Anthropic opens most powerful AI model to public with safeguards

San Francisco, United States

Anthropic, maker of the Claude artificial intelligence (AI) models, made the most powerful version of its technology available to the general public on Tuesday while restricting its use in sensitive areas.

Dubbed Fable 5, the model is the first to be made widely available from the company's new Mythos class its most advanced lineup of AI technology, unveiled in April but restricted over cybersecurity concerns.

Anthropic says Fable 5 is exceptionally good at writing and debugging software code, answering complex research questions and analyzing images.

In parallel, Anthropic is offering an unrestricted version, Claude Mythos 5, to

companies and organizations that already have access to this model family including cybersecurity partners enrolled in its Project Glasswing program.

That select group was expanded in early June to around 200 organizations

in more than 15 countries and is expected to grow further.

Anthropic has restricted access to Mythos on cybersecurity grounds, given what the company calls its ability to quickly iden-

tify vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure, including banking platforms and power grids.

When Project Glasswing launched, some critics accused Anthropic of overhyping the threat to attract attention.

But companies that have tested Mythos have since endorsed its capabilities. The U.S. government which had been in a legal dispute with Anthropic has also tested the model over security concerns.

The White House has since set up an arrangement to test the most powerful models from the leading AI companies before they are released. Mythos 5 is being deployed in collaboration with the U.S. government.

Anthropic says most queries about cybersecurity or

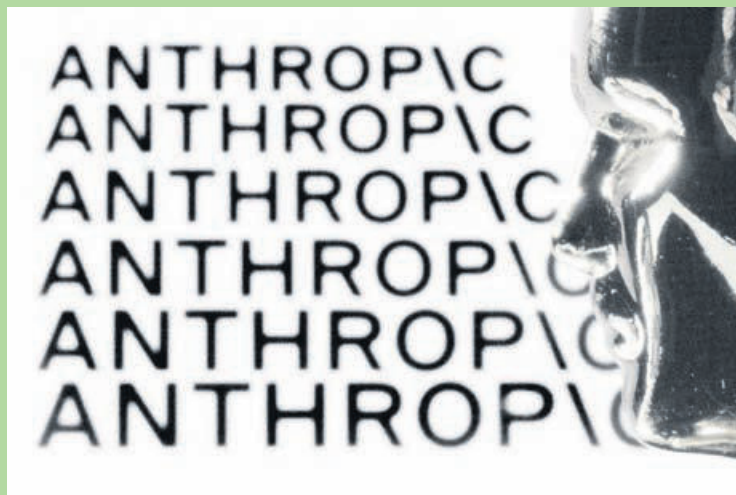
biology and chemistry will be routed instead to the lower-tier model, Opus 4.8, which was made public in late May.

Anthropic also said it had identified large-scale attempts to extract its technology to train competing AI models in authoritarian countries, and these type of queries will also fall back to the less powerful model.

- IPO battle -

The company hired outside experts to spend more than 1,000 hours trying to find ways to bypass these restrictions a process known as red-teaming.

The company also ran a bug bounty program, which pays people to find security flaws. No one found a way to completely unlock the model, Anthropic said. □



This photograph shows a figurine in front of the logo of the U.S. artificial intelligence safety and research company Anthropic during a photo session in Paris on February 13, 2026.

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Serena Williams makes winning return in Queen's Club doubles

London, United Kingdom
Serena Williams made a winning return to tennis after four years in retirement as the American legend partnered Victoria Mboko in a first-round doubles victory at the Queen's Club on Tuesday.

Williams rolled back the years alongside Canadian teenager Mboko in a 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 win over third seeds Erin Routliffe and Nicole Melichar-Martinez at the grass-court tournament in west London.

It was like she had never been away as the 44-year-old produced her trademark thunderous serve and fearsome ground-strokes to the delight of a capacity crowd, including her two young daughters Olympia and Adira and husband Alexis Ohanian.

After appearing to end her glittering career four years ago, the 23-time Grand Slam champion stunned the sporting world on Monday with her shock announcement that she would compete in the Queen's Club



U.S. player Serena Williams (L) reacts while playing with Canada's Victoria Mboko (R) against US player Nicole Melichar-Martinez and New Zealand's Erin Routliffe during their round of 16, doubles match at the HSBC WTA tennis Championships at Queen's Club in west London on June 9, 2026.

doubles.

Williams' decision to pick up a racquet in a competitive setting for the first time since losing to Ajla Tomljanovic at the 2022 US Open had sparked questions about the wisdom of her move.

Would one of the sport's all-time greats be able to ap-

proach her past excellence, or would she be a shadow of her former self?

Williams hadn't played in a tournament since saying she was "evolving away" from tennis in 2022, so inevitably there were signs of rust. But she delivered a typically combative performance

that will intensify questions over a potential return to singles action at Wimbledon, which starts later in June.

Williams, who will take part in the doubles at the Berlin Open from June 15-21, has not won a Grand Slam singles title since the 2017 Australian Open.

On Sunday, she played down suggestions that she would extend her return to singles competition.

But she has won the Wimbledon singles trophy seven times and the prospect of competing at the All England Club in some capacity will be hard to resist, especially if she continues her run at Queen's.

Williams had insisted it is the journey, rather than the destination, that drives her these days.

And, 31 years after her first professional match, this was the latest fascinating adventure for the iconic American.

- Back in style -

Dressed in a white top, pink skirt and matching shoes, Williams arrived on court to cheers and a standing ovation from the capacity crowd in the Andy Murray Arena.

As former Olympic skiing gold medallist Lindsey Vonn watched from the stands, fans held up signs saying 'Welcome back Serena'. □

Somali referee says World Cup 'dream' ruined

Los Angeles, United States

Somali referee Omar Artan said the "biggest dream of my life" had been ripped away after he was denied entry to the United States to officiate at the World Cup.

Artan, who was named referee of the year in 2025 by the Confederation of African Football, has been dropped from FIFA's list of officials after he was refused entry to the US upon arriving in Miami on Saturday.

Somalia is one of several countries on a travel ban list introduced by President Donald Trump's administration as part of a broader

immigration crackdown.

"I am very, very disappointed," Artan told the New York Times on Tuesday in a telephone interview from Istanbul.

"I'm just simply a referee who's trying to live his dream, the biggest dream of my life, to come to the World Cup."

After an 11-hour interview with border officials, Artan said he was taken to a separate holding cell where he was detained for several further hours before being put on a flight back to Istanbul.

"I had the right papers and everything. I had the right visa," he added.

FIFA claimed that it was powerless to influence the

decision, which it said was the sole preserve of tournament co-hosts the United

States.

"In line with previous FIFA events, a host government ultimately determines who receives a visa and who is admitted into their country," said a spokesperson for football's governing body.

A spokesperson for United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said Artan was denied entry following a routine inspection.

"The traveler underwent additional inspection, a routine part of CBP's inspection process when officers need to verify information or determine admissibility," the statement said. □



Somalian referee Omar Abdulkadir Artan gestures during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2024 group D football match between Mauritania and Algeria at Stade de la Paix in Bouake on January 23, 2024.



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Jalen Brunson #11 of the New York Knicks and Stephon Castle #5 of the San Antonio Spurs battle for the ball on the floor during the third quarter in Game Three of the 2026 NBA Finals at Madison Square Garden on June 08, 2026 in New York City.

Spurs handling physicality of Knicks and New York hostility

New York, United States

Handling physicality from the New York Knicks and hostility from New York supporters has helped boost the San Antonio Spurs as they try to pull level in the NBA Finals.

The Spurs trail the best-of-seven championship series 2-1 ahead of game four on Wednesday in New York, where Spurs supporters

were attacked at several watch parties.

"Fans got attacked? I didn't know that," Spurs star Victor Wembanyama said on Tuesday. "My thought of course it's a game. We're just playing a game out there."

"I'm all for passion, but to the respect of each other. That is unacceptable."

New York Police arrested 21 people at a watch party in Bryant Park, upsetting Spurs forward Julian Champagnie, who grew up in Brooklyn.

"It's just not necessary," he said. "No one should be coming to the game getting assaulted like that. It's not what we're playing for." Spurs guard Dylan Harper, from the New Jersey suburbs, said he sees hostility as part of the experience.

"I feel like it's New York, hostile environment," he said. "I don't think it would feel the same if it wasn't this hostile."

Wembanyama, a 7-foot-4 (2.24m) French center, drew a picture of a statue in a park to relax his mind before game three then scored 32 points to lead the Spurs' victory.

"It was not really New York City. It was just playoffs," Wembanyama said of his mental tensions, although he refused to say what else he might do to relax his mind before game four.

Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox dismissed the notion "Wemby" has a villain role, even though Knicks fans heckled him the most in game three. "I don't think it's a villain role. If you get hit, you hit back. That's life. If life hits you, you need to figure out a way to get on your feet and hit it back," Fox said.

"Every time he rolls, he gets tagged, he gets hit. If he's

trying to go set a screen, box out, whatever it may be, he's getting grabbed, getting held. It would be crazy for him to think he's going to get open by not hitting somebody.

"That's basketball. It's going to be physical. No one expects anyone to come out here and not have bumps and bruises or injuries or all these things. I don't think it's trying to be a villain."

"You know that team's going to be physical with you, so you go out there and you try to hit first."

Harper said Wembanyama can handle the pressure from hecklers.

"He just steps up to the moment all the time, no matter what moment it is, where we're at, what game it is. He's just going to step up. That's just the type of player he is," Harper said.

"We understand who we are. We understand what we need to do to win games in this type of environment." It hasn't shaken the Spurs, Castle said.

"Since the end of game two we've still been confident we're going to win this series," Castle said.

"That's what we plan to do."

- 'Be relentless' -

Wembanyama, in his first playoff run, has seen past clubs lose in the Final before later taking their first title. He expects the Spurs can learn quickly enough and adapt to win first without a loss.

"We will see but my bet would be yes, it's possible," Wembanyama said. "And what we've learned? Many things over these playoffs."

"Brace with your hands and not with your chin. Hit below the head if you do... but most importantly, be relentless." □

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